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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE'S MAY 8 MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT URIBE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Milton K. Drucker.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(U) May 8, 2007, 1630, Casa de Narino, Colombia

2.(U) Participants:

United States

The Deputy Secretary
WHA A/S Thomas P. Shannon
CDA Milton K. Drucker
D Staff Assistant Mary Sue Conaway
Political Counselor John S. Creamer (notetaker)

Colombia

President Alvaro Uribe
Foreign Minister Fernando Araujo
Ambassador Carolina Barco
Communications Director Jorge Mario Eastman
Foreign Ministry Patricia Cortes

Summary

3.(C) President Uribe voiced concern about prospects for U.S. Congressional approval of the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and said Colombia would likely need an extension of the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA). He urged the U.S. to improve its measurement of coca cultivation, and said Ecuadorian President Correa appears to be following the radical path of President Chavez. Uribe stressed the GOC's commitment to capture or kill key FARC leaders, renegade ex-paramilitaries, and criminal kingpins, and said the GOC and U.S. needed to redouble their efforts in this regard. The Deputy assured Uribe President Bush is committed to achieving passage of the FTA, and said he would discuss additional support the U.S. might provide Colombia after his return to Washington. End Summary

Free Trade Agreement

4.(C) Uribe voiced concern about prospects for U.S.

congressional approval of the bilateral free trade agreement.

The Colombian legislature continues its ratification process. Uribe said USTR Susan Schwab told him during his May 2-4 trip to Washington that any U.S. congressional deal would likely require amending the text of the current agreement. The GOC would need time to obtain Colombian congressional approval of such amendments, as well as to enact implementing legislation. Meanwhile, time is running out, since the extension of the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA) expires on June 30. Uribe said Colombia would need an additional ATPDEA extension to avoid disrupting critical trade flows.

5.(C) The Deputy reiterated President Bush's commitment to obtaining congressional approval of the FTA, but acknowledged it would be difficult. He assured Uribe the administration considers the Peru, Panama and Colombia FTAs to be a package; it would oppose any U.S. congressional effort to separate Colombia from the other two. He promised to speak with USTR Schwab when he returned to Washington.

Coca Cultivation Numbers

6.(C) Uribe said last year's report by the CIA showing an increase in coca cultivation in Colombia had undermined political support for Plan Colombia in both Colombia and the U.S. It is hard to seek continued assistance, if one cannot show concrete results. The GOC wants objective data, not to manipulate the measurement. Uribe said coca cultivation figures from the OAS' InterAmerican Drug Abuse Control Commission show an overall increase in coca cultivation in the rest of the Andes, including 8,000 hectares in Ecuador as

well as some coca in northern Argentina. If accurate, it would be important to publicize this data. Ambassador Barco added that the U.S. and UN need to reconcile their coca cultivation figures. The Deputy said he would raise these issues with INL A/S Ann Patterson.

Ecuador

7.(C) In response to the Deputy's question about Ecuador, Uribe said the situation in Quito is disturbing. President Correa constantly attacks Plan Colombia, and foreign investment/trade in the harshest terms. Uribe said he fears Correa will follow President Chavez, path and concentrate all power in the hands of the executive. Moreover, he expects Ecuador to further limit its cooperation with the GOC on counterterrorism. Nevertheless, Uribe said the U.S. needs to engage Correa. He said the advice he recently gave President Bush; to invite Correa to the White House still stands.

8.(C) The Deputy said we expect President Correa not to renew the Manta agreement when it expires in 2009. Uribe said the GOC would be willing to allow the U.S. to increase its presence at an existing base in Colombia, such as Tres Esquinas, to replace the loss of Manta.

High Value Targets

9.(S) The Deputy said we were working to see if we could meet President Uribe's request for a Predator UAV. Uribe said the GOC is committed to capturing or killing FARC Secretariat members, fugitive paramilitary leaders such as Vicente Castano, and narcotrafficking kingpins Diego Montoya and Wilber Varela. Uribe clarified that the GOC suspended the extradition of four paramilitary leaders sought by the U.S. due to their participation in the peace process. If any of the four violated the terms of the suspension or committed new crimes, the GOC would extradite them. Uribe said the GOC is prepared to extradite two recently captured renegade

paramilitary leaders-*Ever Veloza (HH) and Miguel Villareal (Salomon)-*as soon as the U.S. files the requests. The GOC would do the same with Vicente Castano.

10.(S) Uribe said the GOC had not made significant gains in the war against the FARC and major narcotraffickers since August 2006. He has only more three years in which to defeat the FARC and other criminal groups, so the U.S. and the GOC need to redouble their efforts. Uribe said it was especially important to locate the U.S. hostages held by the FARC. Once they were located, the U.S. and GOC could decide jointly how to proceed. The Deputy said he would consult within State, the Department of Defense, and the CIA on what more we could do to help the GOC.

11.(U) Deputy Secretary Negroponte cleared this message.

Drucker